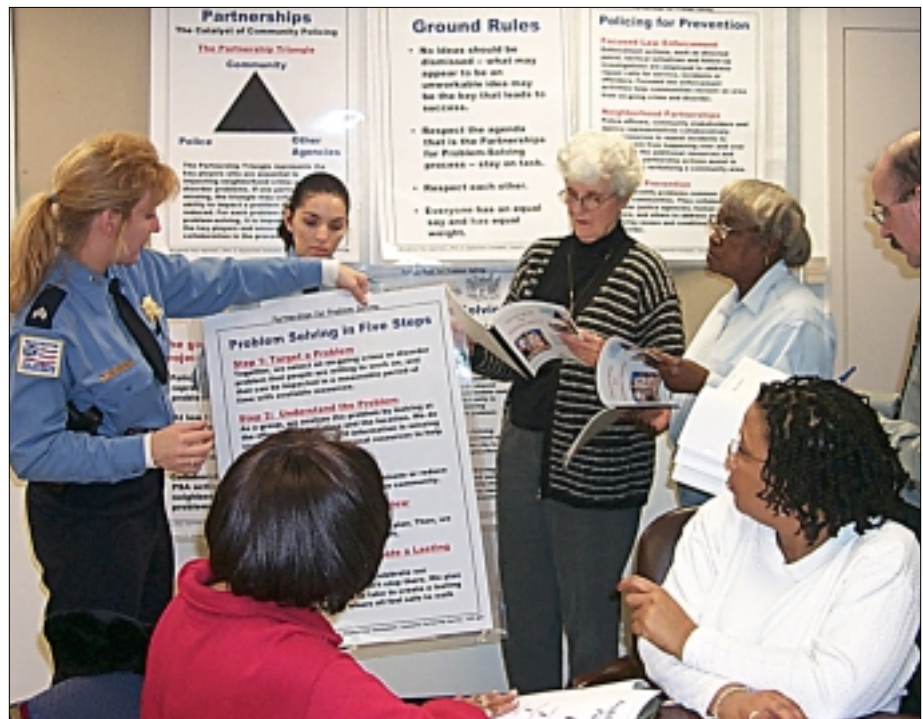


# The Role of the PSAs

---



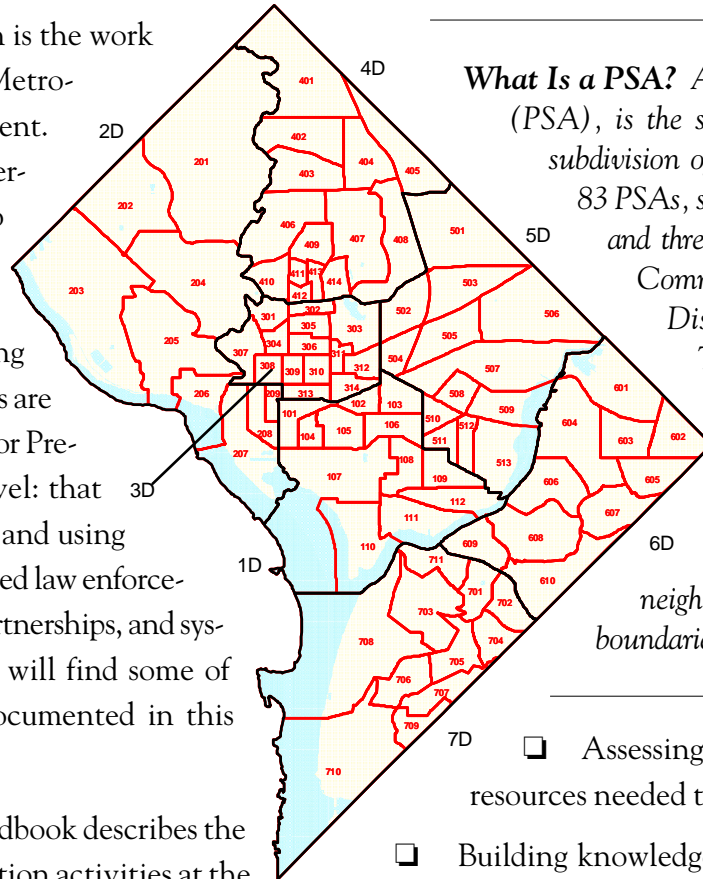
- ❑ *Photo on page 21 (from left): PSA 510's Sergeant Diane Groomes, Officer Maria Flores, and community members Sally Byington, Mattie Day, Earle Rand, Alice Bush, and Sherrell Lawton examine posters in preparation for their role as trainers in MPDC's Partnerships for Problem Solving.*

# Introduction to the Role of the PSAs

Policing for Prevention is the work of all members of the Metropolitan Police Department. But the lieutenants, sergeants, and officers who work in the PSAs carry out the most direct and visible role in preventing crime. Many PSA teams are already doing Policing for Prevention at the PSA level: that is, they are developing and using strategies based on focused law enforcement, neighborhood partnerships, and systemic prevention. You will find some of their success stories documented in this handbook.

This portion of the handbook describes the key Policing for Prevention activities at the PSA level. These activities include:

- ❑ Maintaining PSA integrity—responding to calls for service and getting to know the people and problems in one’s assigned PSA.
- ❑ Establishing a uniformed presence—being visible and accessible to the people who work and live in the PSA.
- ❑ Problem solving, in partnership with residents using the Partnerships for Problem Solving model.
- ❑ Partnering with the community and hosting monthly PSA community meetings.
- ❑ Creating and implementing a PSA Plan.



**What Is a PSA?** A Police Service Area (PSA), is the smallest geographical subdivision of the city. There are 83 PSAs, seven Police Districts, and three Regional Operations Commands (ROCs) in the District of Columbia.

*The size and shape of the PSAs are determined by workload analysis, taking into consideration neighborhood and natural boundaries.*

- ❑ Assessing and requesting the resources needed to get the job done.
- ❑ Building knowledge through research, intelligence gathering, and crime analysis.
- ❑ Evaluating and managing the PSA team and its work through leadership, team meetings, time management, monitoring progress, and recognition for work well done.

Even though the Department requires all PSA teams to do essentially the same work, which includes the use of a uniform problem-solving model and PSA Plan forms, implementing Policing for Prevention will be different in every PSA because every PSA is different. This handbook provides both general guidelines and detailed instructions to assist PSA teams in carrying out Policing for Prevention efficiently and successfully.

# PSA Integrity:

## Getting to Know the Neighborhood

---

The mission of the Metropolitan Police Department focuses not only on preventing crime and fear of crime, but also on working with the community and other agencies to build safe and healthy neighborhoods. In one respect, a neighborhood is a physical location. But what makes a neighborhood are the people who live and work there. Neighbors share an interest in the place they live—how it looks and feels, what activities they want to have going on there, and so forth—and many of them are willing to work together to make their neighborhood a nice place to live and work.

Neighborhoods range in size, but most of them are small, comprising several square blocks. Some PSAs cover more than one neighborhood, and others cover only part of a neighborhood, but PSAs more closely conform to neighborhood boundaries than do districts. So it makes sense for a PSA to have a specific team of officers and officials assigned to it.

### What Is PSA Integrity?

The concept of PSA integrity has two parts: continuity of assignment (being assigned to the same PSA for a period of time) and staying on the assigned PSA during the tour of duty. By being assigned to a specific geographic area for at least one year, members get to know the area, its crime

and disorder problems (in large part, by answering calls for service there) and its residents, businesses, schools, churches and other resources. Being assigned to a single PSA allows members to focus on achieving the Department's mission there and puts them in a position to see the results of their work. This is part of what PSA integrity is all about.

The second part deals with staying on the assigned PSA and finding time for proactive policing there. The Department is in the beginning stages of designing new call response and dispatch policies to support PSA integrity. New call priority codes and a differential police response model that provides an array of alternative responses to non-

---

### **Who Makes Up the PSA Team?**

*The PSA team consists of the officers, sergeants, and lieutenant assigned to a PSA on all three watches. The PSA lieutenant is the PSA manager. He or she is accountable for the quality of policing on the PSA 24-hours-a-day. The PSA lieutenant relies on the PSA sergeants to provide supervisory support during their tour of duty.*

---

emergency calls for service (such as telephone reporting, reporting via the Internet, and scheduled appointments for officer response) will increase the amount of time officers have to engage in proactive problem solving and improve

officers' ability to provide a fast response to real emergencies. A new dispatch model will minimize the amount of time officers spend outside of their assigned PSAs answering non-emergency calls or engaged in other activities.

## The Roles of District and PSA Personnel in Maintaining PSA Integrity

**Officer.** Officers are accountable for making a daily effort to get to know the people who live and work in their PSA, to discern patterns and locations of criminal and disorderly activity in the PSA and share that information with other PSA team members, and to stay within the boundaries of the PSA when on duty. The exceptions are when directed by an official or to respond to a call for officer assistance or another serious emergency.

**Sergeant.** PSA sergeants are accountable for ensuring that PSA integrity is maintained during their tour of duty. They must monitor radio traffic routinely and take appropriate corrective action to prevent officers from responding unnecessarily to calls outside the PSA. PSA sergeants must also make an effort to get to know the community and point out opportunities for officers to do the same.

**Lieutenant.** The PSA lieutenant is accountable for evaluating the quality of PSA operations and personnel activity, including the extent to which PSA integrity is being maintained. Analyzing radio call data, reviewing run sheets, and monitoring the radio are some of the methods available. Identifying and resolving barriers to PSA integrity is also part of the PSA lieutenant's job. Interviewing officers and sergeants about the community and crime and disorder conditions



*Officer Reginald Henderson often stops to talk to business owners in the busy Mt. Pleasant commercial district in PSA 410.*

in the PSA can help the lieutenant determine the extent to which team members have developed a sense of ownership of PSA problems.

**Captain.** The assistant district commander is accountable for determining that the deployment of district resources supports the implementation of district and PSA Plans on their watch. This includes checking that the roll call manpower deployment schedule is consistent with officers' and sergeants' one-year, continuous PSA assignment. Also, by being familiar with PSA Plans and officers' and sergeants' assignments, captains can provide essential supervisory support for the implementation of Policing for Prevention in the PSAs.



## PSA 206: Partnership to Prevent Underage Drinking

The Second District's Lieutenant Pat Burke commands an area teaming with ABC establishments, including liquor and grocery stores, taverns and bars. When the community made it clear that the problem of underage drinking was a priority, the lieutenant, working with a focused mission team sergeant, developed a proactive strategy.

### How the strategy works

An enforcement team consisting of PSA team members, focused mission team officers, and an ABC inspector from DCRA work together carrying out operations in steps. From PSA meetings, the PSA lieutenant identifies the establishments of particular concern to community members. Available data on these establishments is then analyzed by police to help tailor an enforcement plan. As enforcement progresses, copies of violation reports are faxed within 24 hours to the ABC Board, which has a policy of holding revocation hearings after four violations at a particu-



*Officer Steven Evans checks the liquor license of a bar in Georgetown.*

lar establishment. MPDC members follow up on cases with the Board and attend hearings to testify. In addition, officers interview students caught using false identification to get information about where their ID was obtained. Finally, students are required to perform community service by the university's office of student affairs.

### What makes this a focused law enforcement strategy?

Underage drinking is a chronic, harmful problem in part of the 2nd District. It is linked to serious traffic accidents, disorderly conduct, and related fatalities. The partnership between the police and the ABC Board makes for more effective enforcement. Police support the ABC Board's capacity to suspend offenders' liquor licenses by providing documentation and by testifying at hearings. By gathering intelligence and following up on the sources of fake IDs, police maximize the prevention aspect of the law enforcement effort. The sanctions imposed by the local university on its students also add teeth to the prevention effort. Finally, police report back to citizens about results, mobilizing residents to become more active in problem solving.



*Sergeant Jim Brown checks the driver's license of a bar patron.*

# Responding to Calls for Service

---

Responding to calls for service in one's assigned PSA is an important element of PSA integrity because it causes officers to become alert to conditions that cause fear and harm in the PSA. According to the Policing for Prevention philosophy, each call is not just a discrete unit of work to be dispensed with as quickly as possible and then forgotten. Each call is an event that is usually related to other events, and together these related events make up a problem. Each call is not just an assignment to respond, after-the-fact, to an incident that has already occurred. It can also be an opportunity to prevent the next crime.

Improving the chances that an officer can relate an incident to other previous events depends on how efficiently the officer can access information. Department policies and information technology systems are being designed to expand information resources for officers. For example:

- ❑ Assigning members to a PSA for at least one year increases the chances that police personnel will become aware of crime and disorder problems that are chronic or have the potential to escalate.
- ❑ By displaying the history of calls for service at an address via the Mobile Data Computers in the vehicles, officers can respond to a call more appropriately and cautiously.
- ❑ Through new technologies for electronically capturing and disseminating calls-for-service and crime data at the PSA level (such as the new CAD system), the ability of PSA



*Sixth District Officers Ronnie Solomon and Peter Shaw attempt to resolve a disorderly customer dispute at a local establishment.*

team members to identify and analyze related events is enhanced.

- ❑ By instituting 3-1-1, officers' 9-1-1 call workload should be reduced. PSA members will have more time to provide thoughtful and preventive responses to emergency calls for service.

A call for service, even on its own, is an opportunity to prevent crime. Responding to calls quickly and efficiently increases chances of intercepting a crime in progress and apprehending offenders in those instances when they are still on the scene. It can also help build community confidence in the police. Furthermore, each call for service provides an opportunity for PSA members to establish a dialogue with residents and inquire about other or related problems in the community.

# Uniformed Presence

---

When citizens see uniformed police officers in scout cars, on motorcycles and bicycles, and on foot patrol—out on the street, talking to residents, working on police matters—their fear of crime is reduced and their confidence in the police is increased. And when citizens begin to trust the police, they are more likely to share information and participate in Policing for Prevention.

The professional image of the Police Department—influenced in part by the condition of marked vehicles and the appearance of uniformed members—is another factor to consider in developing a strategy to improve the presence of the police in the community.

PSA team members form the core uniformed presence in the PSA. While focused mission team and Mobile Force members also provide a uniformed presence, it is the PSA team that is responsible for establishing the primary police visibility in the PSA.

## Duties of Officers

A professional appearance and a high level of police visibility are achieved when officers:

- ☐ Report for duty properly dressed and with all the required equipment.



*While making rounds of businesses in the PSA, an officer responds to residents' complaints about traffic congestion around a popular grocery store. By parking his vehicle in full view of motorists, he will help deter potential offenders.*

- ☐ Immediately take their assignments after roll call.
- ☐ Return to service promptly after responding to a call.
- ☐ Conduct business checks of open establishments.
- ☐ Stop by schools, recreation centers and other popular locations, especially during opening and closing times.
- ☐ Consider where their presence will have the greatest impact on crime and disorder when on patrol.
- ☐ Use spotlights when patrolling alleys and dome lights (or emergency equipment) while parked and preparing reports.
- ☐ Stop and talk to citizens.
- ☐ Wear raid jackets, if non-uniformed.



## Duties of Officials

PSA lieutenants and sergeants improve the professional image of police and police visibility in the community when they perform the following activities:

- ☐ Conduct thorough uniform inspections.
- ☐ Conduct vehicle inspections on the street.
- ☐ Make regular and effective use of foot, bike, and scooter patrols.
- ☐ Monitor the radio to ensure calls are being handled appropriately.
- ☐ Respond to calls for service with officers.
- ☐ Go to the location of officers when calling for field reports rather than having officers leave their PSAs.
- ☐ Monitor the number of personnel at crime scenes to prevent the accumulation of more members than are needed.
- ☐ Monitor establishments such as convenience stores and gas stations to ensure that officers are not congregating there, or taking long breaks.



*The open-air ministration is designed to create a highly visible, friendly police presence in a location of chronic open-air drug dealing. Officers distribute flyers about upcoming PSA meetings, and provide referrals for people who are addicted to drugs.*

- ☐ Ensure that only personnel on official business are in the station house.

## Other Initiatives

Special initiatives that increase police visibility include:

- ☐ Outdoor roll calls.
- ☐ Open-air ministrations.
- ☐ Walking with citizen patrol groups.

Policing for Prevention is about taking advantage of every resource to prevent crime and the

fear of crime. The value of police visibility as a tool for enhancing crime prevention should not be underestimated.



*Parked on a main thoroughfare in Georgetown with emergency lights, headlights, and dome lights burning, Officer Gilbert Burgess completes his paperwork.*

## Sixth District: “Stop the Violence” Partnership

After the fatal shooting of a grandmother in a chronically violent area of the Sixth District, the commander capitalized on an opportunity to partner with a local radio disk jockey who had expressed concern. The commander and disk jockey co-designed a public safety initiative: a “Stop the Violence” radio station campaign to engage the community in solving the problem.

### How the strategy worked

The Sixth District and WPGC FM 95.5 decided to co-sponsor a town hall meeting, to be broadcast live from the recreation room of the East Capital Dwellings public housing complex. To promote the event, the radio station broadcast public service announcements and invitations to the public. PSA teams handed out flyers and contacted local ANCs and community organizations to ask them to disseminate flyers.

Mayor Williams, representatives of two local community organizations, a pastor, a public housing property manager, and the district commander served as panelists at the event, discussing ways to solve crime problems in the community. Nearly two hundred community members attended and played an active role in the discussion, asking questions of panelists, and volunteering information and solutions for stopping the violence.

In the months following the forum, police and community members implemented a number of the solutions discussed at the town hall meeting. Police met with public-housing managers, asking them to spread the word that police were



*Teachers and school children in the Sixth District enjoy an early spring day during a local field trip.*

requiring all residents to cease and desist drug activity at once, or face eviction. This gave many residents leverage to confront drug dealers and gang members and ask them to leave their property. The public-housing facility also provided residents with video cameras so they could gather evidence on drug dealers and other lawbreakers.

### What makes this a neighborhood partnerships strategy?

The strategy was targeting a problem of utmost concern to the community: serious, chronic violence. The “Stop the Violence” campaign modeled a neighborhood partnership because it involved the police and a local resource. Its primary goal was to reach out and engage neighborhood residents and other stakeholders who were affected by the violence to develop strategies to stop the violence.

# Problem Solving

When police step back from answering one call after another and look at the possible connections among the incidents and other information they have accumulated in collaboration with the community, they've taking the first step of problem-solving—identifying a problem. The next steps are analyzing information about the problem, brainstorming what actions to take, and then actually taking action.

In all these steps, the community is a critical partner. Not only does the community have essential information, they also have resources that can be used to fix the problem. Most importantly, without the community's participation, successful problem solving will be difficult to sustain.

To be truly effective in Policing for Prevention, both police and community need training and practice in building and sustaining active prob-

## Partnerships for Problem Solving

Community Partnership Section • Office of Organizational Development • Metropolitan Police Department



*The Partnerships for Problem Solving logo. PPS is the MPDC's program to train police, community, and other agency representatives in problem-solving. The goal? To train every PSA in the city.*

lem-solving partnerships. Partnerships for Problem Solving (PPS) is the Metropolitan Police Department's program to train police personnel, community volunteers, and representatives from other agencies in the methods and tools for problem solving. PPS trains all the partners together in how to build collaborative relationships from the start. The goal of PPS is to mobilize and train at least one active problem-solving group, which includes community volunteers, police, and agency representatives, in each PSA.



*Residents and police officers in PSA 412 vote on the problem they want to work on together in their first meeting modeled after the Partnerships for Problem Solving process.*

In PPS training, participants address a real problem in their PSA. They choose a problem that causes harm and fear in the neighborhood, but which is also manageable in scope so that they can have a positive impact on the problem in a reasonable period of time. The problem chosen is one that the group cares about and wants to work on together.

The process used to address targeted problems follows the five-step problem-solving model.

*(Continued on page 33)*



# How to Initiate the Five-Step Problem-Solving Process

*This resource sheet can assist a community leader or police officer to guide neighborhood caretakers through problem solving.*

## Step 1 Target a Problem

The problem-solving group should **create a list** of problems that:

- people care about;
- stakeholders have observed as being a crime or disorder problem;
- cause harm to the community;
- have been the subject of repeated calls for service;
- people are willing to work on; and
- the group can impact in a reasonable period of time.

The partners should vote on the problem they want to work on from the list.

## Step 2 Understand the Problem

The problem-solving group should put their targeted problem under a microscope. All participants should offer as much information as possible. Answer the who, what, when, where, why and how questions about the Victim, Offender and Location sides of the Crime Triangle. Each neighbor or police officer holds a piece of the puzzle. Together, the problem-solving group will be able to see the big picture. The more complete the picture, the more effective you will be in impacting the problem. Do not skip this important step.

### Crime Triangle



## Step 3 Create A Plan

**Create a community vision.** Discuss ideas to solve the problem. Set short-term goals (up to 3 months) and long-term goals (3 to 12 months). Include actions that address each side of the Crime Triangle, including assignments for the community, the police and city agencies. How will the targeted area change and how will you measure the success? Together, decide on what to accomplish, who will do the work, and by when.

## Step 4 Take Action and Review Progress

**Walk the Talk! Plan your actions.** Assign responsibilities based on the interest and skills of volunteers. Set a time line for the completion of each step of your strategies. Involve as many people as possible in planning and carrying out the action plan. Were all assigned actions completed? In a group setting with problem-solving partners, review your progress. Evaluate all of the partners' involvement and commitment; effectiveness of actions; if harm was reduced; outcomes (within time lines); and lessons learned.

## Step 5 Celebrate and Create a Lasting Community Presence

Acknowledge what was accomplished. Celebrate with all your active and engaged partners. Share your success through e-mails, newsletters, flyers, local media and other outlets. Agree on methods to maintain success in partnering and impacting the problem, such as expanding or creating an Orange Hat group or initiating a block club. Encourage neighbors, children and seniors to enjoy and use public spaces such as businesses, local parks, and strolling and jogging pathways. **Contact Corporate Communications at 202-727-2663 to share your success story.**



The five steps are covered in detail in the *Partnerships for Problem Solving* workbook. All PSA team members will be trained in Partnerships for Problem Solving and receive a copy of the work-

book. To help groups remain active, follow-up technical assistance is offered to problem-solving groups by the Community Partnership Section in the Office of Organizational Development.

---

*Partnerships for Problem Solving puts a face on the Police Department. We came to know each other, and the community is becoming more of a responsible community.*

— District resident and PPS participant

## **Making Partnerships for Problem Solving Work in Your PSA**

The PSA lieutenant can make or break the success of problem-solving in the PSA. Studies of similar police problem-solving programs have shown that in the “beats” where problem-solving activities and partnerships worked, the key leadership figure was the “beat manager.” So even when the district commander is distracted by other district management duties, the PSA lieutenant can, through solid leadership and the effective use of available resources, build partnerships and solve problems. The process itself is simple enough that anyone with a Partnerships for Problem Solving Fact Sheet (see page 30) can lead a group through the five steps. But putting the process to work requires a manager’s expertise. Here are some tips to help guide you.

- ❑ Try to anticipate the problems that the community will want to work on. Collect and analyze data to identify the hotspots of crime and complaints. This helps guide your outreach strategy and also informs Step 1, “Target a Problem.”
- ❑ Maintain an updated profile of the PSA’s resources and deficiencies. You will need a list of community resources that can be tapped when the group begins to develop the Action Plans.
- ❑ Plan an outreach strategy that involves the PSA team (see page 47). Involving the entire team from the start will help build the team’s ownership of the process.
- ❑ Select a sworn member from the PSA team (don’t rule yourself out) and a community member to facilitate the problem-solving meetings. The co-facilitators must meet together and plan their presentation in advance. Their role is important: they will be “modeling” the police-community partnership for others.
- ❑ Hold one person accountable for completing Action Plan assignments, but create small action teams of two or more. Teams collaborate, evaluate, remind, and support each other through the process.
- ❑ Assign officers to check in with community partners and others in between PSA community meetings. If a month goes by without any contact from the police, community members may become discouraged and lose trust in the partnership.
- ❑ Get feedback from participants about how the process went. As the PSA manager, you’ll want to know the level of police and community engagement in the problem-solving process, as well as their ideas for improving the process and their satisfaction with the results.
- ❑ Keep the problem-solving team mobilized. When you’ve made significant progress, announce your plans to initiate the next problem-solving process to target the next priority problem.

# PSA 510: A Model of Partnerships for Problem Solving

During 1998-1999, PSA 510 showed a nearly 50 percent reduction in crime. As a result, last year the D.C. Council gave PSA 510 an award for its success in problem solving.

The concept of Partnerships for Problem Solving isn't new to PSA 510. For years, police and residents in this Northeast neighborhood have been working collaboratively to impact crime. Their PSA community meetings aren't your typical meetings in which residents report problems with the expectation that the officers will resolve them. In PSA 510's meetings, problems are identified and worked on by both citizens

---

*The police need to be the front runners, to show citizens that we have already taken steps to address problems. How can you ask the community to put forth an effort if you haven't done your part? If you see a drug problem, you don't wait for citizens to complain. You address the problem, so that citizens know that the officers care and are willing to work.*

*– Lieutenant Elizabeth Callahan*

---

and the police. When the liquor license of a local mini-mart came up for renewal, citizens organized a petition drive to block the renewal. The police provided information on arrests and stepped up patrol. They also solicited help from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs and the ABC Board.

Fundamental to PSA 510's success is its dedicated PSA management team: Lieutenant Eliza-



*PSA Lieutenant Elizabeth Callahan talks with Officer Algernon Fogle about areas on which to focus Policing for Prevention strategies.*

beth Callahan and Sergeant Diane Groomes. Lieutenant Callahan emphasizes proactive policing, insisting that officers monitor the PSA closely to keep problems in check. To get citizens to participate in problem solving, according to Lieutenant Callahan, the police must start with a track record of success.

When she's on duty, Sergeant Groomes encourages officers to get out of their squad cars, greet residents, and stop by their homes to introduce themselves and ask about their concerns. The PSA team participates in weekly Orange Hat patrols and organizes regular events so that officers can get to know the youth in the PSA.

PSA 510 publishes a monthly newsletter. The police provide crime and arrest information. The community editor, Roland Chavez, publishes progress reports on specific PSA problems and the work that still needs to be done. Recognition is given in the newsletter to those officers who've done outstanding police work.